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"Ours are the plans of fair, delightful peace,
"Unwar'd by party rage to live like brothers."

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CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION.

The Liverpool Mercury of April 29, contains an account of the proceedings of the *East Riding* clergy at Beverly, Yorkshire, at a meeting lately held by them at that place, for the purpose of considering the propriety of petitioning parliament against any further concessions being made to the Roman Catholics. Two petitions to this effect were adopted, though not without opposition. One of the most able and decided opposers, was the Rev. *Stewart Smith*, of Londenborough. His speech on the occasion is given at length in the Mercury of April 29th. It is able and interesting; and as it furnishes a pretty full view of a subject which is likely to be agitated with increasing interest, for some years yet to come, we have given it nearly entire. No candid person it seems to us can read the speech, without surprise at the short-sightedness and narrow views of those members of the House of Lords, by whom the petition was finally rejected.

Mr. ARCHDEACON.—It is very disagreeable to me to differ from so many worthy and respectable clergymen here assembled; and not only to differ from them, but (I am afraid) to stand alone among them.

I beg leave, Sir, before I proceed on this subject, to state what I mean by Catholic Emancipation. I mean eligibility of the Catholics to all civil offices, with the usual exceptions introduced into all bills—jealous safeguards for the preservation of the Protestant church, and for the regulation of the intercourse with Rome—and lastly, provision for the Catholic clergy.

I object, Sir, to the law as it stands at present, because it is impolitic, and because it is unjust. It is impolitic, because it exposes this country to the greatest danger in time of war. Can you believe, Sir; any man of the most ordinary turn for observation believe, that the monarchs of Europe mean to leave this country in the quiet possession of the high station which it at present holds? Is it not obvious that a war is coming on between the governments of despotism?—that the weak and tottering race of the Bourbons will (whatever then our wishes may be) be compelled to gratify the wounded vanity of the French, by plunging them into a war with England?—Already they are pitying the Irish people, as you pity the West Indian slaves—already they are opening colleges for the reception of Irish priests. Will they wait for your tardy wisdom and reluctant liberality? Is not the present state of Ireland a premium upon early invasion? Does it not hold out the most alluring invitation to your enemies to begin?—And if the flag of any hostile power in Europe, is unfurled in that unhappy country, is there one Irish peasant who will not hasten to join it?—and not only the peasantry, Sir,—the peasantry begin these things, but the peasantry do not end them—they are soon joined by an order a little above them—and after a trifling success, a still superior class think it worth while to try the risk; men are hurried into rebellion, as the oxen were pulled into the cave of Cacus—tail foremost. The mob first, who have nothing to loose but their lives, of which every Irishman has nine—then comes the shopkeeper—then the parish priest—then the vicar-general—then Dr. Doyle, and lastly, Daniel O'Connell. But if the French were to make the same blunders respecting Ireland as Napoleon committed, if wind and weather preserved Ireland for you a second time, still all your resources would be crippled by watching Ireland. The force employed for this might liberate Spain and Portugal, protect India, or accomplish any great purpose of offence or defence.

War, Sir, seems to be almost as natural a state to mankind as peace—but if you could hope to escape war, is there a more powerful receipt for destroying the prosperity of any country, than these eternal jealousies and distinctions between the two religions?—What man will carry his industry and his capital into a country where his yard measure is a sword, his pounce box a powder flask, and his ledger a return of killed & wounded? Where a cat will get, there I know a cotton spinner will penetrate—and let these gentlemen wait till a few of their factories have been burnt down, till one or two respectable merchants of Manchester have been carded, and until the have seen the Cravatists hang the Shanavists in cotton twist. In the present fervor for spinning, Ouran Outangs, Sir, would be employed to spin if they

could be found in sufficient quantities, but miserably will those reasoners be disappointed, who repose upon cotton—not upon justice; and who imagine that this great question can be put aside, because a few Irish spinners are gaining a morsel of bread, by the overflowing industry of the English market.

But what right have you to continue these rules, Sir, these laws of exclusion? What necessity can you shew for it? Is the reigning monarch a concealed Catholic? Is his successor an open one? Is there a disputed succession? If some of these circumstances are said to have justified the introduction, and others the continuation of these measures, why does not the disappearance of these circumstances justify the repeal of the restrictions? If you must be unjust; if it is a luxury you cannot live without—reserve your injustice for the weak, and not for the strong—persecute the Unitarians, muzzle the Ranters, be unjust to a few thousand sectaries—not to six millions—galvanise a frog—don't galvanise a tiger.

If you go into a parsonage-house in the country, Mr. Archdeacon, you see sometimes a style & fashion of furniture, which does very well for us, but which has had its day in London. It is seen in London no more; it is banished to the provinces; and the gentlemen's houses of the provinces, these pieces of furniture (as soon as they are discovered to be unfashionable,) descend to the farm-houses, then cottages, then to the faggot-heap and the dunghill. As it is with furniture, so is it with arguments. I hear, at country meetings, many arguments against the Catholics, which are never heard in London; their London existence in Parliament is over—they are only to be met in the provinces; and they are fast hastening down, with clumsy chairs and ill fashioned sofas, to another order of men. But, Sir, as they are not yet where I am sure they are going, I shall endeavor to point out their defects, and to accelerate their descent.

Many gentlemen now assembled at the Tiger Inn, at Beverly, believe that the Catholics do not keep faith with heretics; these gentlemen ought to know that Mr. Pitt put this question to six of the leading Catholic Universities in Europe. He inquired of them whether this tenet did or did not constitute any part of the Catholic faith. The question received from the Universities the most decided negative; they denied that such doctrine formed any part of the Creed of Catholics. Such doctrine, Sir, is denied upon oath in the bill now pending in Parliament, a copy of which I hold in my hand. The denial of such doctrine upon oath, is the only means by which a Catholic can relieve himself from his present incapacities. If a Catholic, therefore, Sir, will not take the oath, he is not relieved, and remains where you wish him to remain; if he does take the oath you are safe from this peril; if he has no scruple about oaths, of what consequence is it whether this bill pass, the very object of which is to relieve him from oaths? Look at the facts, Sir. Do the Protestant cantons of Switzerland, living under the same state with the Catholic cantons, complain that no faith is kept with heretics? Do not the Catholics and Protestants in the kingdom of the Netherlands meet in one common Parliament? Could they pursue a common purpose, have common friends and common enemies, if there was a shadow of truth in the doctrine imputed to the Catholics? The religious affairs of this last kingdom are managed with the strictest impartiality to both sects; ten Catholics and ten Protestants, (gentlemen need not look so much surprised to hear it) positively meet together, Sir, in the same room. They constitute what is called the religious committee for the kingdom of Netherlands, and so extremely desirous are they of preserving the strictest impartiality, that they have chosen a Jew for their Secretary. Their conduct has been unimpeachable and unimpeached, the two sects are in peace with each other, and the doctrine that no faith is kept with heretics, would I assure you, be very little credited at Amsterdam or Hague; cities as essentially Protestant as the town of Beverly.

Wretched is our condition, and still more wretched the condition of Ireland, if the Catholic does not respect his oath. He serves on grand and petty juries in both countries; we trust our lives, our liberties, and our properties, to his conscientious reverence of an oath, and yet, when it suits the purposes of party to bring forth this ar-

gument, we say he has no respect for oaths. The right to a landed estate of \$3000 per annum was decided last week, in York, by a jury, the foreman of which was a Catholic. Does any human being harbour a thought, that this gentleman, whom we all know and respect, would, under any circumstances, have thought more lightly of the obligation of an oath, than his Protestant brethren of the box? We all disbelieve these arguments of Mr. A. the Catholic, and of Mr. B. the Catholic, but we believe them of Catholics in general, of the abstract Catholic, of the Catholic of the Tiger Inn, at Beverly, the formidable unknown Catholic, that is so apt to haunt our clerical meetings.

I observe that some gentlemen, who argue this question, are very bold about other offices, but very jealous lest Catholic gentlemen should become justices of the peace. If this jealousy is justifiable any where it is justifiable in Ireland, where some of the best and most respectable magistrates are Catholics.

It is not true that the Roman Catholic religion is what it was; I meet that assertion with a plump denial. The pope does not dethrone kings, nor give away kingdoms, does not extort money, has given up in some instances the nomination of bishops to Catholic princes, in some I believe to Protestant Princes; Protestant worship is now carried on at Rome. In the Low Countries, the seat of the Duke of Alva's cruelties, the Catholic tolerates the Protestant, and sits with him in the same parliament—the same in Hungary—the same in France. The first use, which even the Spanish made of their ephemeral liberty, was to destroy the Inquisition. It was destroyed also by the mob in Portugal. I am so far from thinking the Catholic not to be more tolerant than he was, that I am much afraid the English, who gave the first lesson of toleration to mankind, will very soon have a great deal to learn from their pupils.

Some men quarrelled with the Catholics, because their language was violent in the association; but a groan or two, Sir, after two hundred years of incessant tyranny, may surely be forgiven. A few warm phrases to compensate the legal massacre of a million of Irishmen are not unworthy of our pardon. All this hardly deserves the eternal incapacity of holding civil offices. Then they quarrel with the bible society; in other words, they vindicate that ancient tenet of their church, that the scriptures are not to be left to the unguarded judgment of the laity. The objection to Catholics is, that they did what Catholics ought to do—and do not many prelates of our own church object to the bible society, and contend that the scriptures ought not to be circulated without the comment of the prayer-book and the articles? If they are right the Catholics are not wrong; and if the Catholics are wrong, they err in such good company, that we ought to respect their errors.

Why not pay their clergy? the Presbyterian clergy in the north of Ireland are paid by the state; the Catholic clergy of Canada are provided for; the priests of the Hindoos are, I believe, in some of their temples, paid by the company. You must surely admit, that the Catholic religion, (the religion of two-thirds of Europe,) is better than no religion. I do not regret that the Irish are under the dominion of the priests. I am glad that so savage a people, as the lowest orders of the Irish, are under the dominion of their priests, for it is a step gained to place such beings under any influence, and the clergy are always the first civilizers of mankind. The Irish are deserted by their natural aristocracy, and I should wish to make their priesthood respectable in their appearance, and easy in their circumstances. A government provision has produced the most important changes in the opinions of the Presbyterian clergy of the north of Ireland, and has changed them from levellers and jacobins into reasonable men; it would not fail to improve materially the political opinions of the Catholic priests. This cannot, however, be done without the emancipation of the laity. No priests would dare to accept a salary from Government, unless this preliminary was settled. I am aware it would give to government a tremendous power in that country, but I must choose the least of two evils. The great point, as the physicians say in some diseases, is to resist the tendency to death. The great object of our day is to prevent the loss of Ireland, and the consequent ruin of England, to obviate the tendency to death;

we will first keep the patient alive, and then dispute about his diet and his medicine.

Suppose a law were past, that no clergyman, who had ever held a living in the East-Riding, could be made a bishop; many gentlemen here, (who have no hopes of ever being removed from their parishes,) would feel the restrictions of the law as a considerable degradation. We should soon be pointed at as a lower order of clergymen. It would not be long before the common people would find some fortunate epithet for us, and it would not be long either, before we should observe in our brethren of the north and west, an air of superiority, which would aggravate not a little the injustice of the privation. Every man feels the insults thrown upon his caste; the insulted party falls lower; every body else becomes higher.—There are heartburnings and recollections. Peace flies from that land. The volume of parliamentary evidence I have brought here, is loaded with the testimony of witnesses of all ranks and occupations, stating to the House of Commons, the undoubted effects produced upon the lower order of Catholics, by these disqualifying laws, and the lively interest they take in their removal. I have seventeen quotations, Sir, from this evidence, and am ready to give any gentleman my references; but I forbear to read them, from compassion to my reverend brethren, who have trotted many miles to vote against the pope, and who will trot back in the dark, if I attempt to throw additional light upon the subject.

I have also, Sir, a high spirited class of gentlemen to deal with, who will do nothing from fear, who admit the danger, but think it disgraceful to act as if they feared it. There is a degree of fear, which destroys a man's faculties, renders him incapable of acting, and makes him ridiculous. There is another sort of fear which enables a man to foresee a coming evil, to measure it, to examine his powers of resistance, to balance the evil of submission against the evils of opposition or defeat, and if he thinks he must be ultimately overpowered, leads him to find a good escape in a good time. I can see no possible disgrace in feeling this sort of fear, and in listening to its suggestions. But it is mere cant to say, that men will not be actuated by fear in such question as these.—Those who pretend not to fear now, would be the first to fear upon the approach of danger; it is always the case with this distant valour. Most of the concessions which have been given to the Irish have been given to fear. Ireland would have been lost to this country, if the British legislature had not, with all the rapidity and precipitation of the truest panic, passed those acts which Ireland did not ask, but demanded in the time of her armed association. I should not think a man brave, but mad, who did not fear the treasons and rebellions of Ireland in time of the war. I should think him not dastardly, but consummately wise, who provided against them in time of peace. The Catholic question has made a greater progress since the opening of this parliament than I ever remember it to have made, and it has made that progress from fear alone. The House of Commons were astonished by the union of the Irish Catholics. They saw that Catholic Ireland had discovered her strength, and stretched out her limbs, and felt manly powers, and called for manly treatment; and the House of Commons, wisely and practically yielded to the innovations of time, and the shifting attitude of human affairs.

I admit the church, Sir, to be in great danger. I am sure the State is also. My remedy for these evils is, to enter into an alliance with the Irish people—to conciliate the clergy, by giving them pensions—to localize the laity, by putting them on a footing with the Protestants. My remedy is the old one approved of from the beginning of the world—to lessen dangers, by increasing friends and appeasing enemies. I think it most probable, that under this system of Crown patronage the clergy will be quiet. A Catholic layman, who finds all the honours of the State open to him, will not, I think, run into treason and rebellion—will not live with a rope about his neck, in order to turn our bishops out, and put his own in.

We preach to our congregations, sir, that a tree is known by its fruits. By the fruits it produces I will judge your system. What has it done for Ireland? New Zealand is emerging—Otaheite is emerging—Ireland is not emerging—she is still veiled in darkness—her children, safe under no law, live in the very shadow of death. Has your system

of exclusion made Ireland rich? Has it made Ireland loyal? Has it made Ireland free? Has it made Ireland happy? How is the wealth of Ireland preserved; is it by the naked, idle, suffering savages, who are slumbering on the mud floors of their cabins? In what does the loyalty of Ireland consist? Is it in the eagerness with which they would range themselves under the hostile banner of any invader, for your destruction and for your distress? Is it liberty, when men breathe and move among the bayonets of English soldiers? Is their happiness and their history any thing but such a tissue of murders—burnings—hanging, famine, & disease, as never existed before in the annals of the world? This is the system, which, I am sure, with very different intentions, and different views of its effects, you are met this day to uphold. These are the dreadful consequences which those laws your petition prays may be continued, have produced upon Ireland. From the principles of that system, from the cruelty of the laws, I turn, and turn with the homage of my whole heart, to that memorable proclamation which the head of our church—the present Monarch of these realms, has lately made to his hereditary dominions of Hanover—that no man should be subjected to civil incapacities, on account of his religious opinions. Sir, there have been many memorable things done in his reign. Hostile armies have been destroyed; fleets have been captured; formidable combinations have been broken to pieces—this sentiment in the mouth of a king, deserves, more than all glories and victories, the notice of that historian who is destined to tell to future ages the deeds of the English people. I hope he will lavish upon it every gem which glitters in the cabinet of genius, & so uphold it to the world, that it will be remembered when Waterloo is forgotten, and when the fall of Paris is blotted out from the memory of man. Great as it is, Sir, this is not the only pleasure I have received in these latter days. I have seen, within these few weeks, a degree of wisdom in our mercantile law, such superiority to vulgar prejudice, views so just and so profound, that it seemed to me as if I were reading the works of a speculative economist, rather than the improvements of a practical politician, agreed to by a legislative assembly, and upon the eve of being carried into execution, for the benefit of a great people. Let who will be their masters, I honor and praise the ministers who have learnt such a lesson. I rejoice that I have lived to see such an improvement in English affairs—that the stubborn resistance to all improvement—the contempt of all scientific reasoning, and the rigid adhesion to every stupid error which so long characterized the proceedings of this country, is fast giving way to better things, under better men, placed in better circumstances. I confess it is not without severe pain, that in the midst of all this expansion and improvement, I perceive that in our profession we are still calling for the same exclusion—still asking that the same fetters may be riveted on our fellow creatures—still mistaking what constitutes the weakness and misfortunes of the church, for that which contributes to its glory, its dignity, and its strength. Sir, there are two petitions at this moment in this house, against two of the wisest & best measures which ever came into the British Parliament—against the impending Corn Law, and against the Catholic Emancipation; the one bill intended to increase the comforts, and the other to allay the bad passion of man. Sir, I am not in a situation of life to do much good, but I will not willingly do any evil. The wealth of the Riding should not tempt me to petition against either of these bills. With the corn bill I have nothing to do at this time. Of the Catholic Emancipation bill, I shall say, that it will be the foundation stone of a lasting religious peace; that it will give to Ireland not all that it wants, but what it most wants, and without which no other boon will be of any avail. When this bill passes, it will be a signal to all the religious sects of that happy country to lay aside their mutual hatred, and to live in peace, as equal men should live under equal laws. When this bill passes, the Orange flag will fall. When this bill passes, the Green flag of the rebel will fall. When this bill passes, no other flag will fly in the land of Erin: than that flag which blends the Lion with the Harp—that flag which, wherever it does fly, is the sign of Freedom and of Joy—the only banner in Europe which floats over a limited king and a free people.